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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 002444

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PINR](#) [MOPS](#) [KAWC](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/UIGHURS: DUTCH WANT UNHCR INVOLVEMENT  
BEFORE CONSIDERING REQUEST

REF: STATE 158272

Classified By: CDA CHAT BLAKEMAN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

11. (C) On September 2, POLCOUNS delivered reftel demarche regarding the possible resettlement of 15 Uighur detainees from Guantanamo to Anneke Adema, Head of the Dutch MFA's Office of Human Rights Affairs. Adema said that she would circulate the request to the relevant Dutch ministries and provide a preliminary response. Without commenting on the specifics of the case, Adema noted that the Dutch generally coordinate resettlement requests with UNHCR. Per reftel, POLCOUNS noted that the USG had been in discussion with ICRC and UNHCR.

12. (C) POLCOUNS received the Dutch preliminary response on September 7 from Guillaume Teerling in Anneke Adema's Office. Teerling stressed that the request had been studied carefully by the Dutch side. Recalling the earlier discussion of the issue, Teerling said the Dutch agreed that the persons in question should be released and cannot return to China in light of the strong possibility of persecution. As a matter of policy, however, the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization service will only consider resettlement requests from UNHCR. For that reason, the Dutch are not at this time in a position to consider the specific U.S. request, or any other bilateral request of this nature.

13. (C) On September 8, POLCOUNS raised the issue again with Deputy Political Director Pieter de Gooijer, stressing that this was a high priority for the USG. De Gooijer acknowledged that the issue had political implications, but reiterated the standing Dutch policy. Neither he nor other Dutch interlocutors would speculate as to how the Dutch would respond to a similar request coming from UNHCR.

14. (C) COMMENT: While sympathetic to the Uighurs' situation, the Dutch government clearly is not prepared to change its long-standing policy on bilateral resettlement requests in this case. Not only would changing the policy be politically and bureaucratically difficult, but could open the government up to charges of favoritism and/or set a precedent for future bilateral requests. Absent UNHCR involvement, we doubt that higher-level approaches to the Dutch would produce a different response. END COMMENT.

BLAKEMAN